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The Green Thumb

A Newsletter of Extension Horticultural Activities and Events
For York County Extension Volunteers

Vol.3, Issue 4
May 1, 2002

Calendar Of Events

May 1 st , Wednesday	Landscape Diagnostic Clinic, 6:30pm, Port Cove, Olde Port Cove, Tabb
May 4 th , Saturday	Learning Garden Plant Sale, 9:00am-Noon, Learning Garden
May 7 th , Tuesday	Libby Oliver's Garden Tour, 8:00am from Extension Office Parking Lot, (See Article)
May 7 th , Tuesday	Peninsula Master Gardener Training Planning Meeting, 9:30-11:30am, St. Lukes
May 7 th , Tuesday	Landscape Diagnostic Clinic, 6:30pm, Barn Swallow Ridge, Grafton Woods, Grafton
May 8 th , Wednesday	Garden Landscape Design Studies, 9:30am-Noon, Poquoson
May 10 th , Friday	Tree Pruning Clinic, 10:00am, Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk, (See Article)
May 13 th , Monday	Home Gardener Planning meeting, 9:00am-Noon, St. Lukes
May 14 th , Tuesday	Programming Meeting, 9:30am-Noon, St. Lukes room 21
May 15 th , Wednesday	Deadline Apron Orders (See Article)
May 15th, Wednesday	Green Thumb Deadline
May 16 th , Thursday	Landscape Diagnostic Clinic, 6:30pm, Berry's Landing, off Dare Rd., Grafton
May 17 th , Friday	Deadline for Master Gardener College Registration
May 20 th -22 nd	Southeast Regional Master Gardener Conference, Raleigh, NC
May 21 st -23 rd	Master Gardener Spring Study Trip, (See Article)
May 21 st , Tuesday	Landscape Diagnostic Clinic, 6:30pm, Valentine Circle, Lee's Village, Grafton
June 5 th , Wednesday	Vegetable Garden Project, Time TBA, Mt. Vernon Elementary School
June 9 th , Sunday	Master Gardener Picnic, Ice Cream Social, Details to Follow
June 12 th , Wednesday	Advanced Lawn Team Training, 9:00am-3pm, Place TBA (More info next month)
June 19 th , Wednesday	Garden Landscape Design Studies, 9:30am-Noon, Williamsburg
June 20 th -23 rd	Master Gardener College, Blacksburg, (See Article)
July 16 th , Tuesday	Regional Master Gardener Picnic, 11am-2pm, Portsmouth Master Gardener Office

Thursdays Work/Learn Day in the Learning Garden 9:30 –11:30 a.m.

For additions/corrections to the Calendar of Events contact Jody at 890-4940 or Teresa Bennett at 875-0026, e-mail: BennettTeresaH@aol.com. The deadline for the Green Thumb is ALWAYS the 15th of the month, no exception.

E-mail changes: If you have changes to any of the methods of communication to you please notify Jody. Jody will pass the word. We want to keep in contact with you. These changes will be posted to the weekly e-mails and will be in the Green Thumb.

Master Gardener Mission Statement: *Our mission, as trained volunteers in partnership with the York County, Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent, is to provide horticultural educational opportunities to the public through research-based horticultural programs and activities to enhance our environment, lives and community.*

Notes from Terry

Spring has sprung and everyone is sooo busy! Thank you for finding time to make so many of our educational programs such a success. Congratulations to our newest Master Gardeners . . . Marilyn Moren, Ricki Noble, Larry Riddick, and Martha Wilkins. They have successfully completed their 50 hours of volunteering and have been awarded their certificates!! I'm sure the rest of the interns are not far behind and will soon be awarded their certificates. Turn in your hours as soon as you complete them! Thank you to all of you who continue to support the Food Bank at St. Luke's. You can bring your donations to the monthly program meeting or drop it off any day at St. Luke's. Keep your copy of the Green Thumb handy because there are so many dates and opportunities for you. Our annual summer picnic will be an Ice Cream Social this year. Mark your calendar for June 9th and watch the Green Thumb next month for details. It's an event your entire family won't want to miss!

Timesheets

Jody has updated the MG Time Sheet on the internet. Once you open the form in Adobe Acrobat Reader you can fill in the information with your computer before printing it out. This will do a couple of things, make time sheets easier for Dan to read, and sum the totals of the hours you are currently reporting. It will also sum the total of miles you traveled for those that do utilize that block. All MGs with computers are encouraged to use this feature. Jody would greatly appreciate it.

WORK APRONS - Ordering deadline is May 15, 2002

This new item is dark green heavy twill apron with an adjustable bib and three 8+" pockets at the hem. YCMG's round logo will be embroidered on the bib at the top right corner. You can have your apron personalized (pocket, below/above logo, etc.) for \$6.50.

Medium: 24" long, 28" wide (not including ties). Cost is \$16.50.

Large: 26" long, 30" wide (not including ties). Cost is \$18.00.

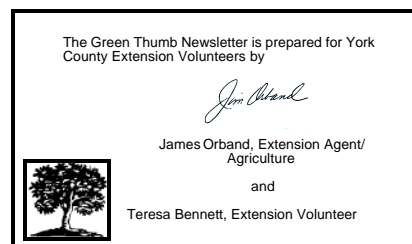
Remember - personalization is \$6.50. If you are interested in ordering the work apron at this time, please send check: Payable to York County 4-H Activity Fund. Mail to: Evelyn Parker, 27 Dryden Drive, Poquoson, VA 23662. Next order will be in late November 2002.

Congratulations to Debbie Frecker for submitting her gardening tip to Kathy Van Mullekom, and having it published both locally and distributed through the wire to other newspapers. Kathy would like to encourage you to submit your favorite gardening tip to her so that she can share it with her readers. Many of Kathy's articles are distributed thru KRT national news wire service and are published by other newspapers.

SPRING STUDY TRIP UPDATE!

Plans are firming up for our annual Spring Study Trip. Jim Orband is going of course and we are planning on Dr. Bankes coming along. Our plans are to leave Tuesday May 21st for LaDew Topiary Gardens north of Baltimore, continuing on towards Longwood or Winterthur. Wednesday we will visit Chanticleer Garden and to the Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania. Thursday we will stop for a visit at some garden but not sure which one. If you want to go contact Eleanor Hill at 868-8646 or at captmi@pinn.net.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES:
Janis Erickson - jerickson6@cox.net
Felice Bond - fbondf@cox.net



MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE

By now you have received information that the 2002 Master Gardener College will be held June 20-23 at Va. Tech Campus in Blacksburg. This Master Gardener College is designed for volunteers that have completed their 50 hours of volunteer commitment. This college is not for those that are in the intern status. A full packet of materials can be accessed on line at:

www.ext.vt.edu/vce/specialty/envirohort/mastergard/master.html

A direct link to the pdf file is:

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/specialty/envirohort/mastergard/02mgcollege.pdf>

This file takes a little time to load so please be patient.

Important Notes:

- Joyce Shelton is coordinating the registrations for Master Gardener College and is an excellent resource if you need to ask questions- joyceshelton@cox.net.
- Registration is due to the York County Extension Office before 5 p.m. on Friday May 17.
- The York County Cooperative Extension Office is paying the class registration fee. Master Gardener's must take care of their own lodging reservations and fee. I am still working on a small vehicle for use to the college. The van is not available. Please plan to carpool. As in the past, the County of York has been very supportive of Master Gardeners attending this educational event.

Conditions that each of you must meet to receive the Master Gardener College registration payment:

- 1) Must have completed your initial 50 hours of intern time.
- 2) Must attend the entire scheduled program to receive full registration payment. No late arrivals and no early departures.

TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES:

A) Pick up the class registration form at the York County Extension Office from Jody or Jim. Please call before you come to ensure that one of us is in the office. We are the only people with the registration form. The form is not on line and Joyce does not have it. Since you do not have to send a check with the form, you may want to complete it while at the office. This will save you a second trip to return it by May 17. Discounts are being offered to those Master Gardeners who have completed 250, 500, 750, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000 plus volunteer hours. We will attach a verification of your volunteer time when we send the forms to Blacksburg. Discounts help us to save on the registration fees, so are extremely important.

Please know if you are eligible for a discount. It is extremely important that your hours be accurate and current with Dan Hawley in the mainframe entry system.

If you wish to participate in the Thursday afternoon tours, the fee is \$5.00. You will pay this fee when you arrive at the college (no prepaids are accepted).

B) Please select classes that will help you serve York County as a Master Gardener.

C) It is recommended and strongly encouraged that you register on line for your housing arrangements. If you do not have a computer, you are welcome to use one in the office, or perhaps a friend will register for you. The form can be found at www.rdp.vt.edu/summer/resreq.html. I went to this site and it looks simple so I suggest you give it a try as the only other option is mailing a hard copy. In case you cannot get on line, this form is also available in our office and will be accepted by the college.

I trust this registration process is relatively simple. I regret the inconvenience that it may cause for you to come to the office for the registration form. Perhaps this inconvenience is offset by the fact that we have enough dollars in this portion of our budget to pay your total class registration fee. We have not been able to pay the whole fee in the past. The registration forms are closely controlled this year due to problems that have occurred in prior years. Evidently units have allowed some participants that were not Master Gardeners to participate. Fortunately, this has not been a problem in York County, but we are all required to follow stricter procedures that have been established.

If you have questions, please contact Joyce, or a Master gardener that has attended in years past. They can provide you with valuable information.

Jim Orband

TREE PRUNING EVENT

The new Hampton Roads Tree Care Association (HRTCA), the Norfolk Botanical Garden, and Virginia Cooperative Extension are cosponsoring a day dedicated to tree pruning at the Norfolk Botanical Garden on Friday, May 10th. Local consulting arborist Burt Smeltzer and Virginia Tech's Dr. Bonnie Appleton will teach a morning classroom session, from 10am to noon. This pair of urban tree care tree experts will present a variety of topics including reasons for pruning trees, how and where to make proper pruning cuts, selection of pruning tools (especially those that are more ergonomic), timing pruning, and the different types of pruning provided by commercial arborists. The afternoon field session, starting at 1pm, will feature arborists from several HRTCA member companies doing actual pruning in trees at the Garden. Arborists on the ground will explain the type of work being conducted, and the type of safety procedures used by certified arborists. The HRTCA commercial companies conducting the pruning are donating all of their work to the Garden.

The cost for this pruning event is \$10, with preregistration encouraged. For lunch either bring a picnic or eat in one of the Garden's gazebos, or purchase lunch from the Garden's Azalea Room restaurant. For more information or to register contact the Garden's Education Department at 441-5838.

SAFETY TOWN-VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

July will be here before we know it! In an attempt to avoid last minute scurrying, presenters are being sought for the various safety topics taught in York County's Safety Town Program. We would greatly appreciate your assistance again this year by providing some of your Master Gardeners to teach the topic of "Poisonous Plants". Just like last year, this activity will be scheduled on the Thursday of each week when the topic is Home Safety. The lesson/activity will be 20-minutes in length and will be repeated for five different groups of eight children.

Safety Town will be held from 9:00 am - 11:30 am, Monday through Friday, at the following locations:

July 8 - 12, 2002	Magruder Elementary School - 700 Penniman Road
July 15- 19, 2002	Mt. Vernon Elementary School - 310 Mt. Vernon Drive
July 22- 26, 2002	Mt. Vernon Elementary School - 310 Mt. Vernon Drive
July 29 - August 2	Grafton Bethel Elementary School - 410 Lakeside Drive

A Safety Town training session/orientation will be held on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building Conference Room located at 301 Goodwin Neck Road. This session is especially important for those who have never before participated in the Safety Town Program. Please contact Mila Gaetano at 867-8131 (mgaetano@bellatlantic.net) to let her know what your interests are.

LIBBY OLIVER'S AND CAROL WILSON'S GARDEN TOUR

You can refer to last Green Thumb for details, but both of these ladies have invited us to visit their private gardens on May 7th. We will meet and carpool from the Learning Garden Parking Lot. Leaving at 8:00 a.m., Libby will be expecting us at her home in Queens Lake between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. for a 45 minute tour. Then we will go on to Carol Wilson's private garden in Lightfoot for a short tour.

Directions in case you want to meet us at Libby's house: To Libby Oliver's house take Queens Lake Exit off of Colonial Parkway. At the Stop sign, turn right. Take the first right onto Lakeshead/East Queens Lake and proceed 1 mile. Turn left onto Nottingham Road. Take 1st left onto Little John Road. Stay to the left at V and proceed to 126, a grey contemporary house on left. Go past mailbox to park in front of house. 126 Little John Road

Carol Wilson's house is on Centerville Rd, across the street from the Outlet Mall in Lightfoot. Her house is the second driveway on Centerville Rd. after you turn off of Route 60 between the Sun Trust Bank and the Outlet Mall. No parking on Centerville or her driveway so please park across the street in the low side of the Outlet Mall Parking Lot next to Centerville and walk across the street to her house. Please stay on the paths in her garden. Give me a call or e-mail me with any questions Eleanor Hill 868-8646 or captmi@pinn.net

Master gardeners grow culture of service

By Alcestis "Cooky" Oberg

When a husband and wife bought land for their dream house near Crawford, Texas, they wanted to preserve its serene natural landscape. So before turning her husband loose with a chain saw, the wife called a friend, a master gardener, to identify the important native plants that should be saved, such as native pecan trees, and suggest what should be planted, such as a lawn of drought-resistant native buffalo grass.

This Texas couple — George W. and Laura Bush — are among the legions of American homeowners who call on master gardeners every year for their free assistance. Nationwide, more than 60,000 volunteer master gardeners answer millions of gardening questions annually. In Texas alone, more than 4,000 volunteers provided nearly 220,000 hours of community service in the year 2000. They answered phones, published more than 1,000 articles, aired hundreds of television and radio garden shows, worked on hundreds of community beautification projects and carried out education programs in 1,700 schools.

President Bush, like his predecessors, has exhorted Americans to give back to their communities by volunteering. His newest initiative, the USA Freedom Corps, urges Americans to contribute 4,000 hours to volunteer service during their lifetimes. He calls it a "new culture of responsibility."

Seeds in Seattle

The master gardener program started in 1972, when area agent David Gibby was assigned the job of answering homeowner gardening questions for two counties around Seattle. Gibby begged for an assistant to help him, but there was no budget for that. So Gibby recruited 300 experienced gardeners and brought in horticulture professors to teach their specialties. After graduation, the newly certified master gardeners answered 5,000 questions that season alone. When the media spread word of the program, Gibby and his colleagues were flooded by calls from other counties in Washington, then Oregon and ultimately, all of the other states.

Grassroots programs flourish

The key to the program's success has to do with its sustained grassroots nature. It has always been neighbor helping neighbor. There is no federal mandate or budget and no national bureaucracy. Instructors are horticulture professors at land-grant state universities. One state coordinator oversees the program, and county extension agents do all of the local recruiting, management and scheduling, sometimes with a master gardener's help. Volunteers pay for their own books. Recruitment is never a problem. Gardening is a top national pastime, and volunteers are eager to pass their knowledge on to others.

The key to the growth of the program is its flexibility. At first, master gardeners just answered questions on the phone or held clinics. But as the groups grew, some developed school programs and community beautification projects. Others set up gardens for nursing homes. As the Internet grew, the technically talented ones developed local gardening Web pages, giving homeowners instant, round-the-clock information. As horticultural science grew to understand homeowners' role in larger environmental issues, professionally trained master gardeners helped their neighbors with water conservation, recycling and the cautious use of chemicals.

Master gardeners are certified only after completing their volunteer hours and are forbidden to use the affiliation for commercial gain. To maintain certification, a volunteer must attend continuing education activities every year.

At a time when volunteerism, conservation and the environment are top priorities for so many Americans, the master gardener program is a perfect model for other organizations to follow.

Alcestis "Cooky" Oberg, a Houston freelance science and technology writer is a member of USA Today's board of contributors.